

## Division 23-4E-4: Landscape for Site Plan

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### 23-4E-4010 Purpose and Intent

As the City of Austin’s population grows and development density increases, it is the purpose of this section to address the City’s natural sense of place and character through the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the existing, natural, and planted landscapes. It is the intent of this section to establish minimum landscape standards that provide ecological benefits at the site level. The requirements of this section are meant to enhance, improve, and maintain the quality of the Austin landscape by providing the following:

- (A) To aid in stabilizing the environment’s ecological balance by contributing to the processes of air purification, oxygen regeneration, ground water recharge, and storm water infiltration, while at the same time aiding in noise, glare, and heat abatement;
- (B) To preserve and replenish the local stock of native trees and vegetation;
- (C) To prevent overcrowding of **developed** land and provide air quality;
- (D) To provide visual buffering **that safeguards and enhances property values and protects public and private investment;**
- (E) To preserve and protect the unique identity and environment of the City of Austin and preserve the economic base attracted to the City of Austin by such factors;

- (F) To provide cooling shade thereby **reducing urban heat**; and
- (G) To enhance public health, safety and general welfare.

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## 23-4E-4020    **Applicability**

### (A) **Applicability/Exceptions**

- (1) This section applies to:
  - (a) All new development requiring a site plan **that** includes a proposed use, a building, stormwater controls, **and associated improvements** within the city's zoning jurisdiction; except:
    - (i) Substantial restoration of a building within one year after the building is damaged;
    - (ii) Restoration of a building designated as a historic landmark;
    - (iii) Single family and duplex; or
    - (iv) Boat dock.
  - (b) All substantial improvements or renovations projects in which:
    - (i) The proposed and existing structures have a combined 5,000 square feet first floor (GFA) footprint; or
    - (ii) **For which the project cost exceeds 50 percent of the pre-project value of the structure).**

### (B) **Conflicts with Other Provisions**

- (1) If this Division conflicts with other provisions of this title, this Division prevails.
- (2) If this Division conflicts with a provision of Chapter 23-9 (Transportation), Article 23-10E (Drainage), Article 23-3C (Urban Forest Protection and Replenishment), or Article 23-3D (Water Quality), those provisions prevail.

### (C) **Alternative Compliance**

- (1) The Director may approve a site plan that proposes an alternative to compliance by using criteria provided by the Environmental Criteria Manual. The alternative compliance site plan must achieve, or be an improvement on, the intent of the landscape requirements in this section.
- (2) In considering an alternative compliance plan, the Director shall give special consideration to the preservation of existing native trees **or other environmental constraints**.

## 23-4E-4030 Landscape Requirements



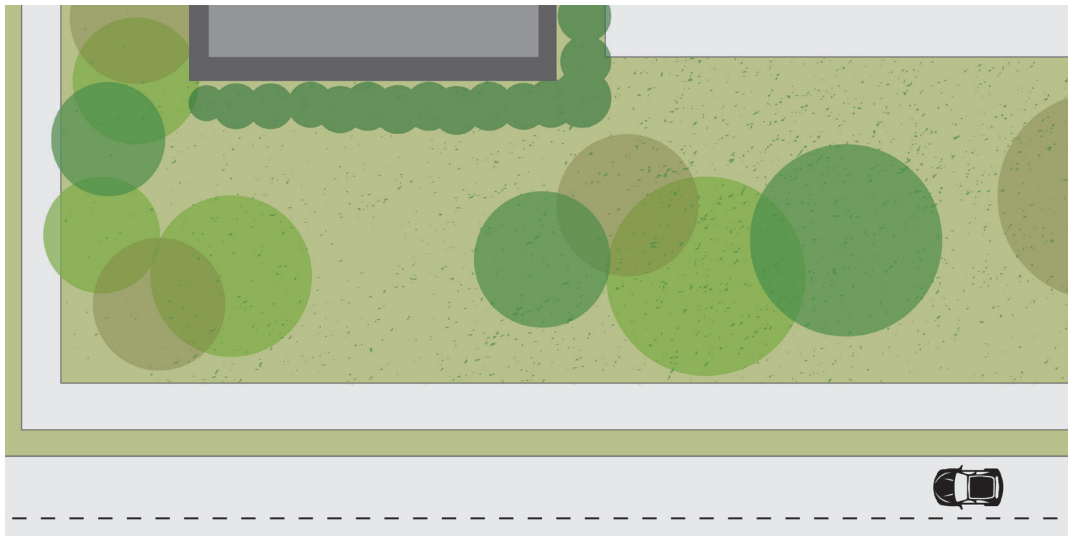
Overview of Landscape and Buffer Types		
Landscape Type	Section Number	Symbol
Front Yard Planting	23-4E-4040	A
Foundation Buffer	23-4E-4050	B
<b>Surface Parking Area</b>		
Tree Islands	23-4E-4060	C
Landscape Medians	23-4E-4070	D
Parking Lot Perimeter Landscape	23-4E-4080	E

Overview of Landscape and Buffer Types (continued)		
Landscape Type	Section Number	Symbol
<b>Compatibility Buffers</b>		
Intermittent Visual Obstruction	23-4E-4090	F
Semi-Opaque	23-4E-4100	G
Opaque	23-4E-4110	H
<b>Other Types</b>		
Functional Green	23-4E-4120	I <sup>1</sup>
Visual Screening	23-4E-4130	J

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Not shown in diagram

## 23-4E-4040 Front Yard Planting



### Description

The **Front Yard Planting** provides landscaping between the front building facade and the adjacent right-of-way.

## Applicability

The **Front Yard Planting** applies to all commercial and multi-family developments located on a public right-of-way.

## Requirements

The minimum number of required plantings (in chart below) must be located within the Front Yard Planting without conflict with structures, paving, or service utility spacing requirements.

Healthy, existing plant materials that are located within undisturbed areas of the **Front Yard Planting area**, may be credited at 100 percent toward the minimum plant requirements.

Requirements of Environmental Criteria Manual Tree Diversity Standards apply.

## Green Infrastructure

The Front Yard Planting may comply with Section 23-3D-6030 (Water Quality Control and Beneficial Use Standards) by integrating green stormwater infrastructure into landscape design and/or using stormwater for irrigation of landscaped areas.

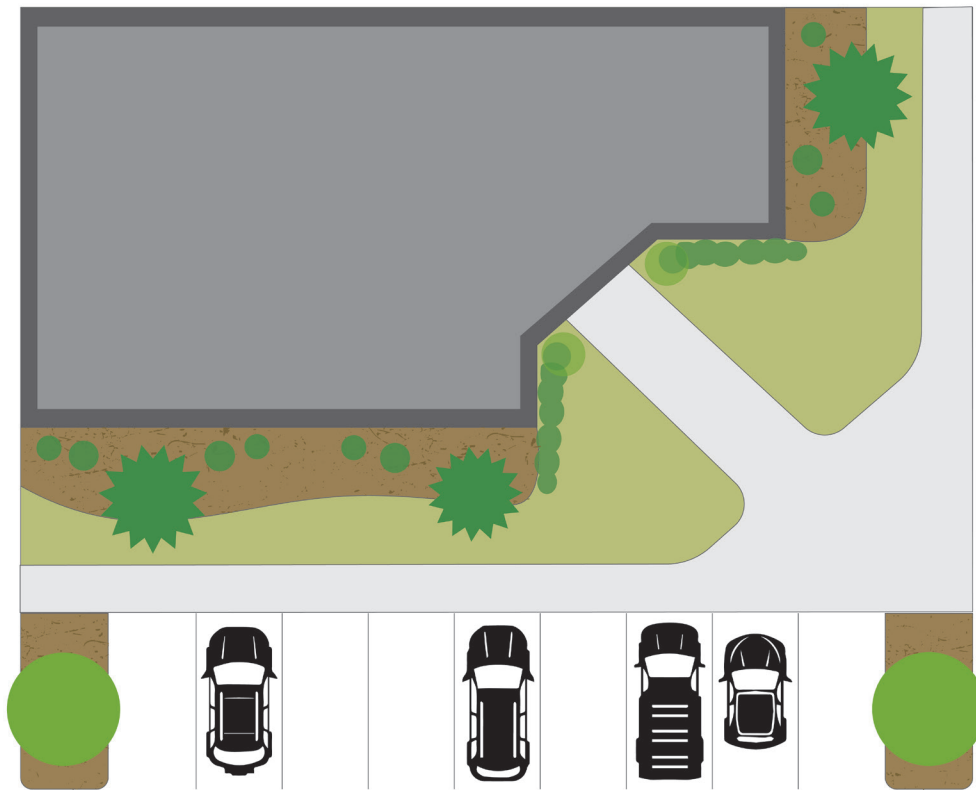
## Front Yard Planting Requirements

When setback is:	Front Yard area is calculated* from front property line to offset width of:	Min. % of Front Yard required to be Planted Landscape Area**	Shade trees required	Ornamental trees required in Front Yard Landscape Area
0	NA	NA	NA	NA
5' min-10' max	10'	50%	1/300 sf	3/300 sf
10' min. -15' min.	12'	50%	1/400 sf	3/400 sf
20' min. – 30' min.	15'	50%	1/500 sf	3/500 sf

\*Square feet of driveway perpendicular to street within Front Yard is not included in calculation.

**\*\*Planted Landscape Area** means the area of ground surface completely covered in living plant materials including; trees, shrubs and grasses, groundcovers, perennials and annuals.

## 23-4E-4050 Foundation Buffer



### Description

Foundation Buffer is required between any structure exterior wall and any portion of a parking lot or drive aisle. A Foundation Buffer is not required around service/loading areas or drive-through facilities.

### Applicability

A Foundation Buffer is required in all zones.

### Requirements

Minimum width of Foundation Buffer shall be 10 feet. Sidewalks and ramps are excluded from this width.

Minimum length of Foundation Buffer shall be equal to 75 percent of length of each exterior wall facing a parking lot or drive aisle.

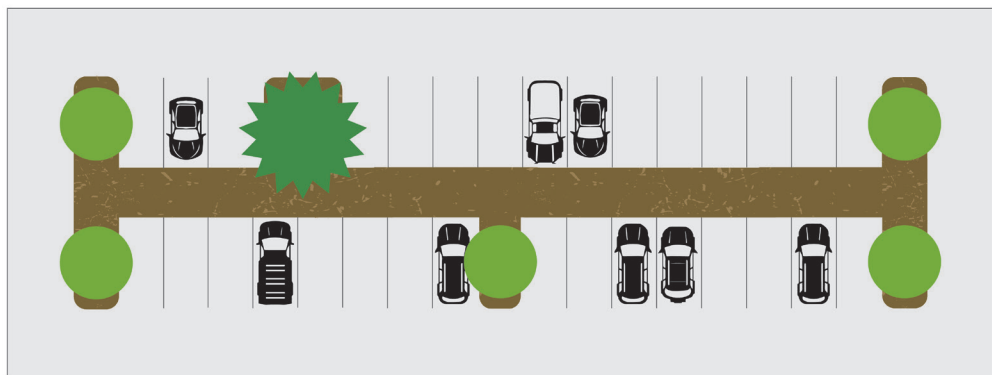
### Planting Requirements

Plant Type	Quantity
Ornamental trees	5 per 100 linear feet
Perennial shrubs, grasses, and/or groundcovers	45 per 100 linear feet <sup>1</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> No more than 50% shall be small shrubs which are shrubs no higher than 4 feet at full, mature growth.

23-4E-4060     Surface Parking Tree Islands



Description

Tree islands allow for shade trees to grow in parking areas for the purpose of providing shade, reducing heat island effect, and promoting plant diversity.

Applicability

Surface Parking Tree Islands apply to all off-street parking lots.

Requirements

Location and Quantity

One shade tree (existing or proposed) is required at the end of every parking run to separate the last stall from the adjacent travel lanes.

No more than eight consecutive parking stalls can occur without an intervening tree island.

Exception for Saving Existing Trees

In order to preserve existing trees and foster context-based design flexibility, the number and location of tree islands can be reduced to the extent that not more than 12 parking stalls occur between tree islands.

Island Size for Proposed Trees

Tree Island Minimums

Tree Islands shall be sized to meet Soil Volume Requirements

Width	10' measured from edge of pavement <sup>1</sup>
Length	Entire length of parking stall

Tree Island that Preserves Existing Tree

Width	10' measured from edge of pavement and no less ½ critical root zone
Length	Entire length of parking stall and no less ½ critical root zone

Notes

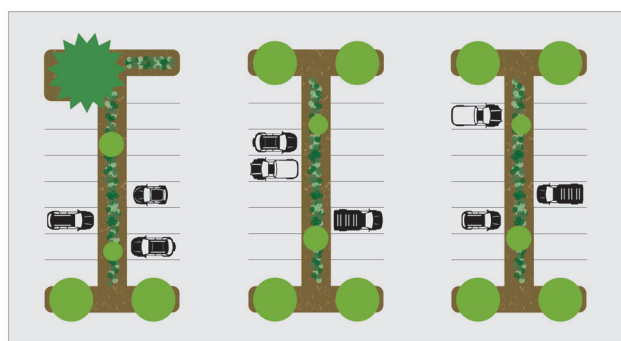
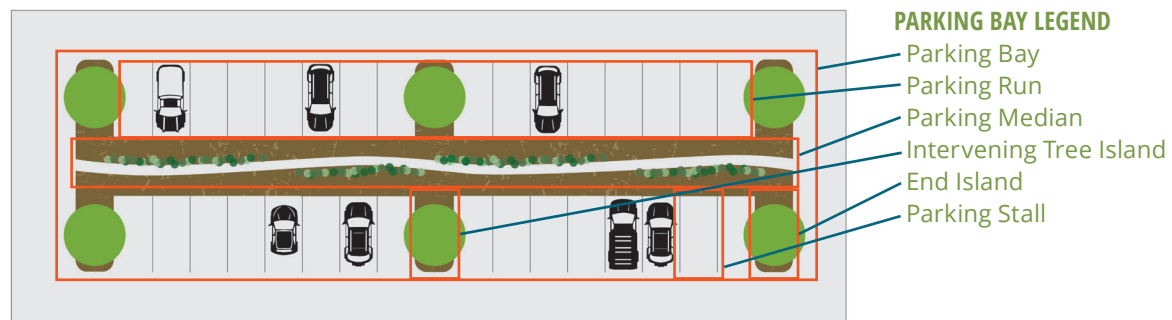
<sup>1</sup> Or comply with soil volume standards in Environmental Criteria Manual

Green Infrastructure

New tree planting, surface parking tree islands and medians shall be graded to receive stormwater in accordance with the Environmental Criteria Manual, except where preservation of existing trees does not allow. Edge of pavement treatment is required to allow runoff to enter planting areas as well as protect planting from automobile traffic.

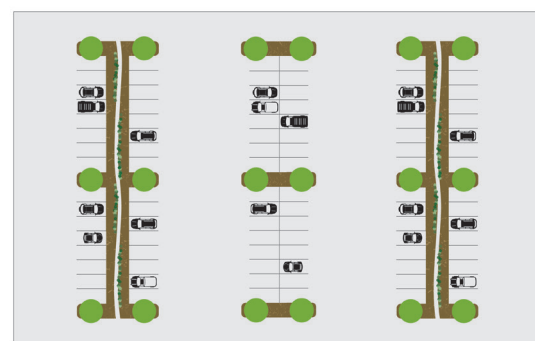
This area may comply with Section 23-3D-6030 (Water Quality Control and Beneficial Use Standards) by integrating green stormwater infrastructure into landscape design and/or using stormwater for irrigation of landscaped areas.

## 23-4E-4070 Surface Parking Landscape Medians



### STANDARD

Each parking bay contains a 10' wide Landscape Median; existing tree is wider end island and counts as two trees



### OPTIONAL

If the parking lot has 120 parking stalls, every other parking bay contains a 15' wide Landscape Median with 5' wide sidewalk running the entire length

### Description

Landscape Medians **separate** parking runs on the interior portions of parking lots.

### Applicability

Landscape Medians apply to **surface** parking lots that have more than one parking bay of parking stalls.

### Requirements

#### Landscape Median Minimums

Width	10' measured from edge of pavement <sup>1</sup>
Width to Preserve Existing Tree	18' or ½ critical root zone, whichever is wider

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Or comply with soil volume standards in Environmental Criteria Manual

### Optional Configuration

If surface parking lot has 120 parking stalls or more, **every other parking bay** may contain a 15 foot wide landscape median with a walkway of at least 5 foot width running the entire length of the median.

### Green Infrastructure

Parking lot islands **and** medians shall be graded to receive stormwater in accordance with the Environmental Criteria Manual, **except where preservation of existing trees does not allow**. Edge of pavement treatment is required to allow runoff to enter planting areas as well as protect planting from automobile traffic.

This area may comply with Section 23-3D-6030 (Water Quality Control and Beneficial Use Standards) by integrating green stormwater infrastructure into landscape design and/or using stormwater for irrigation of landscaped areas.



23-4E-4080     Surface Parking Lot Perimeter Landscape



Description

The Parking Lot Perimeter Landscape serves the purpose of screening surface parking lots from internal circulation routes (private or public) and maintaining pedestrian vitality along commercial centers and mixed use corridors serving pedestrian traffic.

Applicability

Parking Lot Perimeter Landscape applies to all off-street surface parking lots and public or private thoroughfares where landscaping is not otherwise required. Parking Lot Perimeter Landscape also applies to buffers adjoining surface parking lots where no cross-access is provided.

Requirements

Perimeter Landscape	Width
With Planting	10'
3 foot max height (fences or walls and landscape)	5'
Planting and Screening	
Ornamental trees	1 per 20 linear feet
Small or medium shrubs	1 per 3 linear feet

Where no fences or walls are used, small evergreen shrubs shall be used to form the continuous visual screen in the surface parking lot perimeter landscape. Shrubs shall be maintained at a minimum height of 3 feet and a maximum height of 4 feet.

Green Infrastructure

This area may comply with Section 23-3D-6030 (Water Quality Control and Beneficial Use Standards) by integrating green stormwater infrastructure into landscape design and/or using stormwater for irrigation of landscaped areas.



23-4E-4090 Intermittent Visual Obstruction Buffer



Description

This type of Compatibility Buffer functions as an intermittent visual obstruction from the ground to a height of at least 20 feet, and creates the impression of spatial separation without eliminating visual contact between properties.

Requirements

Minimum Buffer Width	15'
Min. planting per 100 linear feet	Aggregate Caliper
Evergreen Shade Trees	9"
Evergreen Ornamental Trees	12"
Shrubs per 100 linear feet	Quantity
Evergreen Shrubs	15

Green Infrastructure

Healthy, existing plant materials that are located within the undisturbed area of a buffer and are listed in Appendix F and Appendix N of the Environmental Criteria Manual can be credited at 100 percent toward the minimum planting requirements.

This area may comply with Section 23-3D-6030 (Water Quality Control and Beneficial Use Standards) by integrating green stormwater infrastructure into landscape design and/or using stormwater for irrigation of landscaped areas.

23-4E-4100     Semi-Opaque Buffer



Description

This type of Compatibility Buffer functions as a semi-opaque screen from the ground to a height of at least 6 feet, and creates the impression of a spatial separation without eliminating visual contact between properties.

Requirements

Minimum Buffer Width	15'
Min. planting per 100 linear feet	Aggregate Caliper
Shade Trees	12"
Ornamental Trees	14"
Shrubs per 100 linear feet	Quantity
Shrubs	33

Green Infrastructure

Healthy, existing plant materials that are located within the undisturbed area of a buffer and are listed in Appendix F and Appendix N of the Environmental Criteria Manual can be credited at 100 percent toward the minimum planting requirements.

This area may comply with Section 23-3D-6030 (Water Quality Control and Beneficial Use Standards) by integrating green stormwater infrastructure into landscape design and/or using stormwater for irrigation of landscaped areas.

## 23-4E-4110 Opaque Buffer



### Description

This type of Compatibility Buffer functions as an opaque screen from the ground to a height of at least 20 feet. This type of buffer prevents visual contact between uses and creates a strong impression of total separation.

### Requirements

Minimum Buffer Width <sup>1</sup> 15'

Min. planting per 100 linear feet	Aggregate Caliper
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Evergreen Shade Trees	18"
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Evergreen Ornamental Trees	20"
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Shrubs per 100 linear feet	Quantity
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Evergreen Shrubs <sup>1</sup>	55
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### Notes

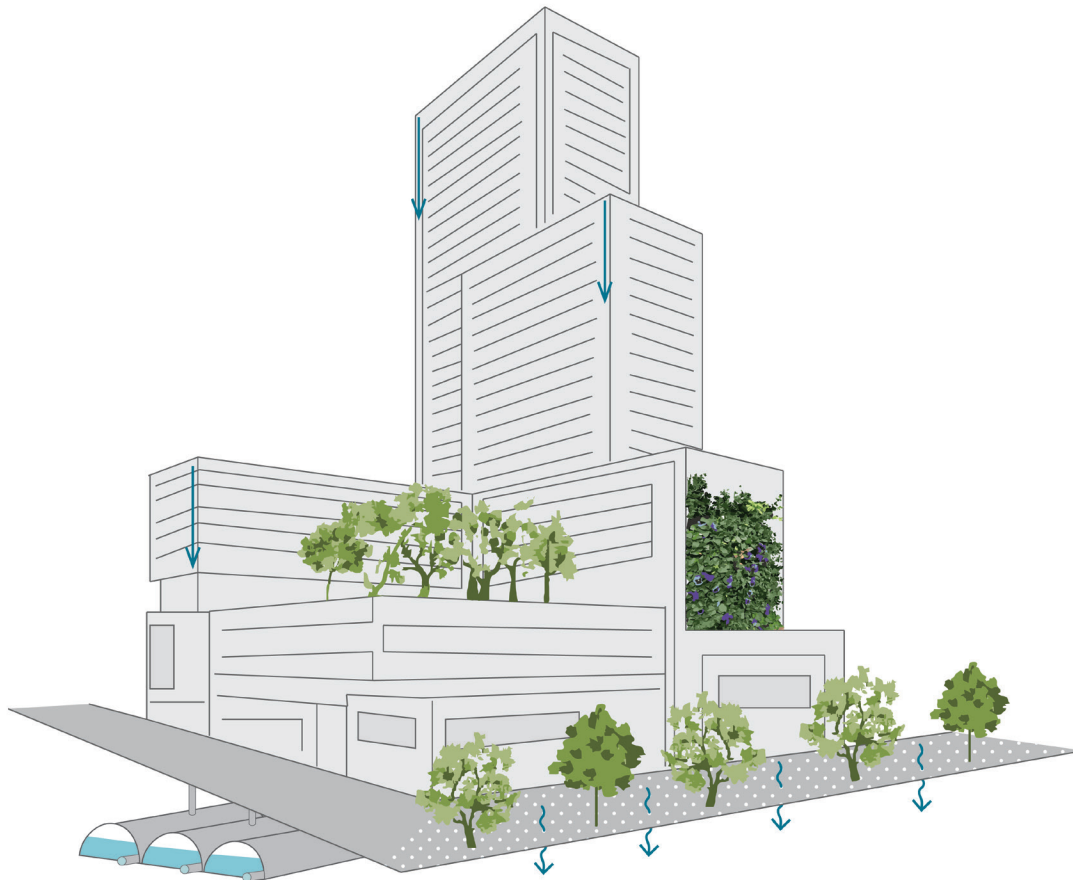
<sup>1</sup> Buffer width can be reduced to 12 feet when an 8-foot, two-sided, solid masonry wall is utilized. Shrubs are not required when an 8-foot, two-sided, solid masonry wall is utilized.

### Green Infrastructure

Healthy, existing plant materials that are located within the undisturbed area of a buffer and are listed in Appendix F and Appendix N of the Environmental Criteria Manual can be credited at 100 percent toward the minimum planting requirements.

This area may comply with Section 23-3D-6030 (Water Quality Control and Beneficial Use Standards) by integrating green stormwater infrastructure into landscape design and/or using stormwater for irrigation of landscaped areas.

## 23-4E-4120 Functional Green



### Description

Functional Green is a landscape requirement designed to provide landscape on sites with little to no area to meet the standard landscape requirements or provide plantings at ground level. It requires an applicant to select from a weighted menu of Green Infrastructure options to provide an amount of ecosystem function equivalent to the amount provided by sites that can meet the standard landscape requirements.

### Applicability

Functional Green applies to sites with an impervious cover limit greater than 80 percent. Functional Green does not apply to a site with a surface parking lot, or in the drinking water protection zone (Barton Springs Zone, Water Supply Rural watersheds, Water Supply Suburban watersheds).

### Requirements

Requirements are prescribed in Environmental Criteria Manual.



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**23-4E-4130 Visual Screening****(A) General Requirements**

Screening shall be required to conceal specific areas of high visual or auditory impact or hazardous areas from off-site views. Such areas shall be screened at all times, unless otherwise specified, regardless of adjacent uses, zones, or other proximate landscape material. *The Environmental Criteria Manual shall prescribe standards for screening in accordance with this section.*

**(B) Items to be Screened**

The following items shall be screened in accordance with this Section:

- (1) Large waste receptacles (e.g., dumpsters and cardboard recycling containers) and refuse collection areas;
- (2) Loading and service areas;
- (3) Outdoor storage areas (including, but not limited to, inoperable vehicles, appliances, tires, manufactured homes, building materials, equipment, raw materials, and aboveground storage tanks) located within 200 feet of a public right-of-way;
- (4) Exterior shopping cart storage areas located adjacent to single-family development;
- (5) Ground-level mechanical equipment (*excluding* utility meters);
- (6) Water quality and detention ponds, excluding rain gardens, biofiltration ponds, and wet ponds; and
- (7) Telecommunication equipment and facilities.

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**23-4E-4140 Submittal Requirements****(A) Landscape Plans**

Landscape plans for development shall be prepared by, and bear the seal of a landscape architect licensed to practice in the State of Texas. Landscape plans shall be provided as part of the submission for site plan approval and shall:

- (1) Be sealed by Landscape Architect;
- (2) Be drawn to scale and include property boundaries, north arrow, engineer or architect's graphic scale, and date;
- (3) Delineate existing and proposed structures, parking bays/stalls, access ways and other vehicular use areas, sidewalks, utilities, easements, and height and voltage of power lines on the property or adjacent property;
- (4) Provide tree protection plan and plan to relocate existing trees and plant communities during construction, if appropriate;
- (5) Identify all existing vegetation, soils, landscape features and rock materials;
- (6) Show on the plan specific location, species, size and quantities of proposed trees;
- (7) Depict water quality control and/or beneficial use areas;
- (8) Indicate the common and scientific name and quantity of plants to be installed using "Landscape Legend" code format as prescribed by the Environmental Criteria Manual;
- (9) Illustrate existing utilities and proposed utilities;
- (10) Include a fully completed, permanently affixed "Landscape Legend" as prescribed by the Environmental Criteria Manual;
- (11) Include planting notes, details, and specifications;
- (12) For the first 18 months, include schematic irrigation plans and irrigation notes (Environmental Criteria Manual Appendix O);
- (13) Provide tree mitigation analysis;
- (14) Provide landscape calculations; and
- (15) Provide accurate sheet numbering and title according to submittal-set legend.

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**23-4E-4150 Final Inspection**

- (A) The Director shall inspect each site to ensure compliance with this section. Before the Director may conduct a final landscape inspection, it must receive a letter, under seal, from a licensed landscape architect, stating that the project has been implemented in accordance with the approved plan.
- (B) Any site seeking a certificate of occupancy before landscape installation shall provide a Developer's Agreement to Landscape Inspector.



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**23-4E-4160 Landscape Maintenance****(A) Time for Installation of Required Landscape**

- (1) Time Limit. All required landscape shall be installed in accordance with the required planting standards set forth in this Section before issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy unless a developer agreement is submitted.

**(B) Maintenance of Landscape Materials**

The owner shall be responsible for the maintenance of all landscape areas not in the public right-of-way. Such areas shall be maintained in accordance with the approved landscape plan or alternative landscape plan and shall present a healthy and orderly appearance free from refuse and debris. All plant life shown on an approved landscape plan or alternative landscape plan shall be replaced if it dies, is seriously damaged, or is removed.

**(C) Monitoring of Compliance with Landscape Standards**

- (1) The Director shall inspect a development site before issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the development and such certificate shall not be issued if the landscape required under this Section is not living, healthy, or installed in accordance with the approved landscape plan.

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**23-4E-4170 Planting & Soil Standards**

Owner shall ensure that all plants thrive. New plantings provided in accordance with this section shall comply with the standards found in the Environmental Criteria Manual.

**(A) Irrigation Requirements**

Irrigation is required to ensure survival. Plants and all new trees must be irrigated for a minimum of 24 months by one of the following:

- (1) An automatic irrigation system;
- (2) A hose attachment within 100 feet of the landscaped area; only if there is not a road or parking pavement between the hose attachment and the landscaped area; or
- (3) A temporary, above ground automatic irrigation system, if the system complies with the water conservation requirements in the Environmental Criteria Manual.

**(B) No permanent irrigation is required for the following:**

- (1) Undisturbed natural area;
- (2) Undisturbed existing trees; and
- (3) Areas that have been revegetated with native seed and that are irrigated by temporary irrigation during the establishment period as specified in the Environmental Criteria Manual.

**(C) Automatic Irrigation systems shall comply with TCEQ Chapter 344, as well as the requirements in Environmental Criteria Manual Appendix O, and Code of Ordinances Chapter 6-4 Water Conservation.**

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